



**Minutes of the Oving Parish Council Meeting
held on Tuesday 26th March 2024 at 7.15pm at the Village Hall, Oving**

Present:	Cllr Ambrose McGinn (Chair) Sue Severn (Clerk) Cllr Ben Glover	Cllr Trish Perkins (Vice-Chair) Cllr Mark Cheetham Cllr Alistair Walker-Smith
In attendance:	Phil Gomm (Buckinghamshire Councillor) Sharon Matheou (Hall Manager) Laura Williams (Minutes) 19 other members of the public	James Hann (Oving Football Club) Dennis Atkinson (Speeding)

1. Apologies for Absence

Actions

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Open Forum

Football club consultation

Cllr McGinn welcomed the attending members of the public and began with the following summary of the Oving Parish Council position on the Oving Football Club request to hold league matches on Oving recreation ground on a Sunday.

Oving Football Club approached the Parish Council regarding the potential of a further team (ladies) playing on the recreation ground on a Sunday. Use of the recreation ground for further football teams has been controversial in the past. The Parish Council decided to consult the village comprehensively in early January with an insert into the monthly parish newsletter. The newsletter is distributed to every property and widely read. It was considered to be the most effective way to reach all villagers as some choose not to use social media. However, a call for inputs to be sent directly to parish councillors was also posted on the Oving Community Facebook page for completeness.

Cllr McGinn emphasised that the consultation that had been held was not a poll but was a call for opinions that Oving Parish Council would use as part of their decision-making process. Oving Parish Council occasionally asks the village for views on some subjects. However, the reason for the existence of the Parish Council is to take balanced decisions on behalf of the village and generally without consultation - as is done for many decisions, such as village hall maintenance and village grass cutting.

Cllr McGinn noted that the Parish Council's decision not to allow organised football on a Sunday was based on multiple factors. It took current activity, traffic, and pitch wear and tear into account, as well as the status quo of no organised football on a Sunday. There was no objection to ladies' football per se, the issue was the longstanding position of no organised football on a Sunday.

Cllr McGinn then invited comments from the attending members of the public, saying that any material addition to previously expressed views would be taken into account. It is noted that of the attending parishioners, those wanting football to go ahead on a Sunday (2) were the minority.

Views expressed by members of the public

A limited number of matches is being asked for – 12 games over 6 months of the year. The matches would use the pitch from 1-4pm every other Sunday. Those in favour of football on a Sunday did not consider the historical caveat of no organised games on a Sunday to be valid. On the contrary, others attending felt that allowing any organised games on a Sunday would set a precedent and that in any case, 12 Sundays per year was a significant proportion.

Multiple views were expressed that the space is a recreation ground and not just a football pitch. The recreation ground was reported as difficult to use for other activities when football is happening. It was remarked that families are stretched to find time to spend together and having a free facility to use in the village is special. Many attending parishioners expressed that they want to be free to use the space as a recreation ground. One parishioner explained that they had wanted to book the hall for a family gathering on a Saturday but did not because the atmosphere from the football (including foul language), clearly heard from the hall, was not a suitable environment for the gathering and would have prevented open windows or use of the environment immediately outside the hall.

It was repeatedly noted that the objection is to ANY organised games on Sundays and is not an objection to any particular group of users (i.e., the objection is not to women playing football).

Quinton was suggested by attending parishioners as an alternative venue. James Hann confirmed that Quinton had not been ruled out as a venue, but that this would change the catchment area, potential quality of players, and possibly the team name. James Hann is keen to keep the Oving name on any team expansion due to the historic standing of Oving Football Club. It was noted by a parishioner that no football on Sundays is also historic to Oving.

A parishioner observed that the recreation ground was given to the village, exclusively and in perpetuity for the benefit of the people of Oving and that currently, Oving Parish Council grant Oving Football Club the exclusive right to play on the pitch. The parishioner considered that, through the Parish Council, the people of Oving should have control over what happens on the recreation ground. This was applauded by many people present.

A parishioner remarked that as the recreation ground was a gift to the people of Oving from Mrs Yates-Thompson, her wishes for the conditions of her gift should be respected.

The 2 attending parishioners in favour of football on a Sunday did not believe that a proper consultation had been conducted. They called for a vote in which every parishioner would vote, with the majority vote deciding the outcome. They objected to the consultation being the only chance to comment and observed that there were a small proportion of

respondents compared to the population of the village. They felt those objecting respondents were showing a “not in my back yard” attitude. They believed that the consultation was not publicised sufficiently (others attending the meeting disagreed with this).

There have been comments on the matter on Facebook and it was noted that many who commented on Facebook did not live in the village.

Car parking for the recreation ground on a Saturday remains a problem. Cones are put out, but this has tended to move problems further along the road. James Hann confirmed that Oving Football Club has always acted on feedback received. It was noted that hall use and tennis activities also add to the parking difficulty.

Tennis is played on a Sunday on the tennis courts. James Hann asked for clarification on why this was allowed but football wasn't. It was explained that the tennis court is considered separate from the rest of the recreation ground and at the time the use was granted, tennis was not considered to be included in the term “organised sport.”

It was noted as extremely unfortunate that women's games are only played on a Sunday in the UK currently. Several parishioners suggested that the matches could be moved to be played on a different day.

It was clarified that some of the women interested in a women's team for Oving were previously part of a development team at Long Crendon, but that this development team no longer exists and Long Crendon have no plans to reinstate it.

A parishioner expressed their disappointment that some parishioners who do not live on Bowling Alley and are therefore less directly affected, should want to override the wishes of those who live on Bowling Alley. The parishioner encouraged villagers to support each other in maintaining everyone's quality of life, in this and any other issues arising in the future. The parishioner expressed disgust that the matter had been reported to the Bucks Herald.

James Hann thanked the Parish Council for listening to and consulting on Oving Football Club's proposal for Sunday matches.

Cllr McGinn thanked everyone for their views, which were again taken into account. See Item 6.

Other matter raised in the Open Forum

- A parishioner requested a litter bin in the recreation ground near the playground. Sue Severn explained that bin emptying would not be possible that far from the car park. The Parish Council will look into what could be provided. **SS**
- A parishioner noted that the big bins are often left in front of the pedestrian gates, blocking access, and obliging pedestrians to use the vehicle access to the car park, which is not as safe. The Parish Council will look into this. **SS**
- A parishioner asked for an update on a second defibrillator for the village. The Parish Council is currently exploring options (see item xx).
- The goal area on the football pitch needs recovery/maintenance. James Hann will coordinate.

- It was clarified that there are two meetings in May. One is the Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council (14th May 2024) and the other is the Annual Parish Meeting (30th May 2024).
- In response to a question from a parishioner, it was explained that there is a lock on the outside tap for the village hall because it has been subject to nuisance (i.e., being turned on and left on by persons unknown).
- A parishioner asked what will be done to manage the hedge/fence along the Bowling Alley edge of the recreation ground. Cllr McGinn explained that a portion of the fence and hedge has just been replaced, and that the intention is to manage the rest of the hedge as it is (see item 6).
- A parishioner reported finding litter in the brown waste bins and requested a sign. Sue Severn explained that signs are not found to be effective for this sort of issue. Sharon Matheou will increase her monitoring of the bins.

SM

Update from Buckinghamshire Councillor Phil Gomm

- Phil Gomm welcomed the opportunity to be able to address more parishioners than usual and explained that as Buckinghamshire Councillor he tries to deliver as much as he can for the Parish Council. Phil Gomm is chair of the Winslow and villages Community Board, which can provide grant funding for community projects. He encouraged everyone to consider projects for funding and confirmed that this can include rewilding.
- Phil Gomm thanked David and Rachel Barnett for their litter picking activities.
- Phil Gomm is working with HS2 for a tree planting initiative and welcomed suggestions for locations. The trees can go in public spaces but not private gardens.
- It was explained that kerb metal cannot be fitted on the narrow pathway on Bowling Alley by Highways. This is because the path has been extended overlapping the drain cover and not the other way around (the path has not always been present). However, the kerb metal can be fixed privately.
- Phil Gomm noted that he was sad to see a village divided by a debate over a facility [the recreation ground] that was given as a gift, that as the use of the recreation ground was in the conveyance it would need a legal challenge to change it, and he was of the opinion that the playing of sport was more important than the team name it was played under.

At the end of the Open Forum there was a short break while the attending members of the public left the meeting.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Oving Parish Council Meeting held on 9th January 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record by the Chair.

Councillors decided that going forward, only agreed minutes will be sent to the village newsletter for publication. Laura Williams will send the agreed 9th January minutes to the newsletter.

LW

5. Planning

There were no applications to consider.

6. Recreation Ground

Football club – see also Open Forum.

Councillors unanimously ratified the decision not to allow organised football to be played on the recreation ground on Sundays, noting particularly in their decision that: BG

- **There is no objection to women’s football itself, the only objection is to ANY organised football on a Sunday on the recreation ground.** SS
- **Oving Parish Council completely support Oving Football Club and their efforts.** SS

There is a water leak associated with the football club house. Cllr Glover has turned off the internal stopcock and will personally turn it on/off for matches while the problem is investigated. From the meter, it is a substantial leak, currently thought to be somewhere between the reading room and the club house. Sue Severn will liaise with Wave water, who have issued a large bill, and attempt to get the bill reduced. It was noted that because the leak is on the recreation ground, it is the Parish Council’s responsibility to fix it.

James Hann noted that Oving Football Club are currently looking to form a committee (there isn’t one at the moment), and that they may have to look elsewhere to expand.

Oving Football Club use half of the big shed behind the football pavilion, and the small shed for line marking equipment. The big shed needs sorting as there are also Parish Council marquees etc in them. Cllr Glover will do this with the football club – key access will be arranged. BG

Play equipment – a company separate from RoSPA are being consulted for advice on safe repairs. A new fund is available that could help to pay for equipment – the Community Ownership Fund [<https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/grants/the-community-ownership-fund-1>]. The grant would need matched funding which could be applied for via the Community Board. Sue Severn suggested applying for a £300,000 grant to “increase community facilities”. The item will be added to the next meeting’s agenda. SS

Outdoor gym equipment – this will use “106” funding, around £2600. Sue Severn will circulate pictures. SS

Reading Room - the floor is collapsing. Jacking the building up to repair the floor is prevented by the electrics. Glued and screwed plyboard can be used for now to make a repair. Cllr Glover can carry out this work for the cost of materials only and will provide a quote. BG, SS

Recreation ground hedge – Bowling Alley. The hedge needs to be cut back severely as it is overhanging the verge and smothering the daffodils. AM, SS

Defibrillator - there is an agreement in principle for The Black Boy to house a second village defibrillator on the wall of the pub. Sue Severn will obtain a quote for costs and investigate funding before a decision is made. SS

7. Village Hall

The village hall manager’s report had been circulated to councillors.

It was clarified that Footsteps nursery is responsible for paying for repairs to their shed (the roof is leaky). The Parish Council bought the shed for Footsteps nursery, and they are paying the Parish Council back. Cllr Glover will liaise with Footsteps nursery for the repair.

BG, SM

Some hall blinds need repair/replacement and are being done gradually. Footsteps nursery will be required to pay for any damage done by themselves (verified by the usual weekly inspection).

SM

Some outstanding payments from the Brownies group have been paid.

There are plenty of hall bookings, with plenty of interest during the week from a wide range of groups. There have been 2 evening events recently, which Sharon Matheou has personally opened and closed, and Sharon is keeping in contact with nearby residents. After earlier ending times were introduced for evening events these types of bookings have decreased, but there are new bookings of other types.

The Parish Council thanked Sharon Matheou for her relationship building with the community.

8. Highways & Speeding

- Dennis Atkinson provided an update on speeding, having resumed monitoring. The overall proportion of cars speeding is <15% at any location, but speeding vehicles are generally concentrated into the morning and afternoon commuting periods. The village is used as a cut-through from Oving Road to North Marston Hill. Phil Gomm will liaise with Dennis.

Councillors offered their sincere condolences to Dennis for the death of Pollie Newman, who is missed.

BG

- Bench cleaning – Cllr Glover has completed bench cleaning for all but one bench and will finish this.

- Bollard replacement on the green – Sue Severn has obtained a quote of £650 for the replacement of 28 wooden bollards around the green. Cllr Glover will investigate if this can be done for a smaller price.

BG,SS

- Laura Williams and helpers were thanked for pruning the basal growth from the recreation ground trees.

SS

- The Local Area Technician (LAT) will be asked to inspect the bend at the junction of Church Lane and Baulk Road, for visibility.

AM

- Cllr McGinn will approach the landowner of the footpath leading from Stone view into Whitchurch to discuss accessibility. Accessibility of the pavement along the main road will also be looked at.

BG

- Cllr Glover will provide a quote for materials to repair the bus shelter on North Marston Hill (at materials cost and the cost of a carpenter where one is needed).

9. Finance

- The electronic payment run was approved.
- The accounts to the end of February 2023 were agreed as circulated.
- The current year's budget will be exceeded by approximately £3k. This will leave approximately £8k to £9k to carry forward to reserves.

- The Parish Council unanimously agreed to appoint Gus Orchard as the external auditor.

10. Devolved Services and Ground Maintenance 2024

The decision to stay with RTM contractors for devolved services and ground maintenance has been ratified and Cllr Perkins has done a walk around the village with RTM.

- Bunshill will need a working party as RTM struggle to access.
- The path from the green to Oving Road will be cleared where possible (it needs to be established if there is still an intact path under the current mud).
- Grass cutting will start in April. There will be a wildflower patch in the grass by the Pightle (on the right-hand side if turning into the Pightle).

All

11. Meetings

Nothing new to report.

12. Dates of the next Parish Council Meetings

Annual Parish Council Meeting 14th May 7.15 at the village hall.

Annual Parish Meeting 30th May 7.15pm at the village hall.

There being no further business, the Chair ended the meeting at 9.21pm